

Message Text

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64

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /075 W

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R 031353Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8374

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 2620
CAIRO PASS ALEXANDRIA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR PINT PINS ET

SUBJECT: HOLY SYNOD REPORTEDLY ACCEPTS ACTING PATRIARCH YOHANNES

REF: ADDIS ABABA 2470 AND PREVIOUS

1. PRESS, FEB. 28 REPORTS THAT "MEMBERS OF HOLY SYND OF ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH" (EOC) HAVE SENT A MESSAGE TO EPMG (A) SUPPORTING THE DEPOSITION OF "ABA" (FATHER) TEWOFLOS; (B) PRAISING "THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO ENSURE THE AUTONOMY" OF THE CHURCH AND (C) SUPPORTING THE DECISION TO NAME ARCHBISHOP YOHANNES ACTING PATRIARCH. "THE CHURCH FATHERS ALSO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT A NEW PATRIARCH OF THE EOC WOULD BE ELECTED ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE," ARTICLE STATES (CF ADDIS ABABA 2086).

2. A SOURCE ON THE EOC "AD HOC COMMITTEE" ESTABLISHED TO
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FORMULATE REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEW ADMINISTRATIVE

REGULATIONS FOR THE EOC, HAS TOLD US THAT THE HOLY SYNOD IS IN-DEED PREPARED TO SUPPORT YOHANNES' NOMINATION TO ITS INTERIM LEADERSHIP. SOURCE ADDED THAT YOHANNES, WHEN FIRST APPROACHED, STRONGLY RESISTED THE CALL TO THE ACTING LEADERSHIP OF THE EOC. HE ACCEPTED ONLY WHEN HE RECEIVED ASSURANCES OF THE STRICTLY TEMPORARY NATURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT. THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE CONFIRMED BY REPORTS NOW REACHING US THAT ABUN YOHANNES HAS LET IT BE KNOWN ONCE AGAIN THAT HE WOULD NOT BE A CANDIDATE FOR PRIMATE OF THE EOC IN NEXT SUMMER'S ELECTION.

3. ACCORDING TO SAME "AD HOC COMMITTEE" SOURCE, EPMG HAS NOW ALLOWED EOC A BUDGET OF \$ETHIOPIAN 35 MILLION. THIS WILL PERMIT CHURCH TO PAY THE LOWER CLERGY WHICH HAS BEEN WITHOUT REVENUE SINCE THE NATIONALIZATION OF RURAL LAND (INCLUDING CHURCH LAND) AND HAS THEREFORE BEEN FLOODING INTO TOWNS IN SEARCH OF SUCCOR AND SUSTENANCE. SYSTEMATIC EFFORT NOW IN COURSE TO GET EACH CHURCH TO PROVIDE PATRIARCHATE (AND THE AD HOC COMMITTEE) WITH ITS DRAFT BUDGET SO THAT THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE EOC MAY BE MORE ACCURATELY GAUGED.

HUMMEL

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